

Department of State 1418/78 INCOMING AP217 TELEGRAM

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INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00
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FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7950

SECTION 1 OF 2 BUENOS AIRES 8248

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR, OAS, PINT, SHUM, AR
SUBJECT: GOA'S IAHRC ANNOUNCEMENT: BACKGROUND AND FALLOUT

REF: A) BUENOS AIRES 7958; B) BUENOS AIRES 8171

SUMMARY. THE FOREIGN MINISTRY PUBLICLY ANNOUNCED ON OCTOBER 17 THAT THE GOA HAD RESPONDED FAVORABLY TO THE INTEREST EXPRESSED BY THE INTER-AMERICAN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION TO SEND A DELEGATION TO ARGENTINA FOR A SITE VISIT. STORY RECEIVED PROMINENT PRESS PLAY. CLARIN'S STORY INDICATED THAT THE FOREIGN MINISTRY WAS REOPENING NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE IAHRC TO WORK OUT THE DETAILS FOR THE VISIT.

RECONFIRMING WHAT HE HAS SAID IN THE PAST, HOWEVER, A WELL-PLACED PRESIDENTIAL AIDE ASSURED US THAT MONDAY'S FOREIGN MINISTRY NOTE TO THE IAHRC PUTS INTO OPERATION AN AGREEMENT PREVIOUSLY WORKED OUT CONFIDENTIALLY BETWEEN THE GOA AND THE COMMISSION. THE COMMISSION WILL HAVE CONSIDERABLE LATITUDE, ALTHOUGH IT WILL NOT BE GIVEN ACCESS TO MILITARY BASES. THIS CONCESSION HAS NOT BEEN GIVEN WITHOUT SOME RESISTANCE FROM HARD-LINE MILITARY SECTORS AND THEIR ALLIES, AND THE PRESS PLAY SURROUNDING THE FOREIGN MINISTRY ANNOUNCEMENT SUGGESTS THE GOA MAY BE REPEARING PUBLIC OPINION GRADUALLY FOR THE GOA TURN-AROUND. THE COMMISSION VISIT IS EXPECTED IN THE SECOND QUARTER OF 1979. GOA RETAINS AN INTEREST IN HAVING A VISIT BY ASSISTANT SECRETARY VAKY, BUT OUR SOURCE RECOGNIZED THAT THE TIMING OF SUCH A VISIT MAY BE DEPENDENT UPON THE PROPOSED CABINET CHANGE AND BEAGLE CHANNEL DEVELOPMENTS. END SUMMARY.

1. THE BUENOS AIRES PRESS OCTOBER 17 GAVE WIDE COVERAGE TO NEWS THAT THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS HAS AGREED TO A VISIT TO ARGENTINA BY THE INTER-AMERICAN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION. GIVEN CLARIN'S CURIOUS PRESS PLAY OF THE FOREIGN MINISTRY ANNOUNCEMENT CONCERNING THE INTER-AMERICAN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION SUGGESTING THAT THE SCOPE OF FREEDOM TO BE ALLOWED THE IAHRC REMAINS YET TO BE WORKED OUT, ENBOFF CONSULTED OUR USUAL CASA ROSADA SOURCE ON THIS SUBJECT THE SAME DAY.

2. OUR SOURCE STATED THAT WHILE FOREIGN MINISTER MONTES NOTE TO THE IAHRC DELIVERED OCTOBER 16 IN WASHINGTON REPEATED THE SAME "JURIDICAL-LEGAL-CONDITIONS" LANGUAGE WHICH THE FOREIGN MINISTRY HAS BEEN WONT TO USE IN THE PAST--THUS LENDING THE IMPRESSION THAT THE GOA MAY NOT HAVE CHANGED ITS PREVIOUS PUBLICLY EXPRESSED STAND ON THE TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR AN IAHRC VISIT--IN FACT THE TERMS WERE WORKED OUT DISCREETLY WITH THE IAHRC SOMETIME AGO IN WASHINGTON. ACCORDING TO OUR SOURCE IT WAS ALSO AGREED IN THESE CONFIDENTIAL TALKS THAT THE OFFICIAL ARGENTINE NOTE OF REPLY WOULD NOT ADDRESS ITSELF TO THE 7-POINT IAHRC INTERROGATORY ITEM-BY-ITEM IN ORDER NOT TO PRECIPITATE A RISKY PUBLIC POLEMIC IN ARGENTINA. RATHER, THE NOTE SIMPLY STATES THAT THE IAHRC IS INVITED TO CARRY OUT ITS OBSERVATIONS "IN LOCO" (AS PROVIDED IN THE IAHRC'S

STATUTES). REITERATING THAT TERMS HAD BEEN WELL AGREED, OUR SOURCE SAID THAT THE COMMISSION WILL HAVE ACCESS TO PRISONS AND RELATIVES OF DISAPPEARED PERSONS AND MAY MEET WITH ALL THE POLITICAL LEADERS IT WISHES. IT WILL NOT REPEAT NOT HAVE ACCESS TO MILITARY BASES HOWEVER. ("VIDECA HIMSELF WOULD BE BOOTED OUT OF THE MILITARY CAMPS IF HE WISHED TO ENTER FOR PURPOSES OF SNOOPING AROUND", THE AIDE SAID ONLY HALF-JOKINGLY.)

3. THE FOREIGN MINISTRY NOTE REPORTEDLY INVITES THE IAHRC TO VISIT ARGENTINA AT A TIME OF ITS CHOOSING, BUT FOR ADMINISTRATIVE REASONS STATES A GOA PREFERENCE FOR A VISIT IN THE SECOND QUARTER OF 1979, I.E., MARCH THROUGH MAY OF THAT YEAR.

4. NOTWITHSTANDING THE AIDE'S ASSURANCE THAT THE TERMS HAVE BEEN MUTUALLY AGREED UPON, HE SUGGESTED THAT USG

*negotiations
date not yet
set & terms
not set
finally set*

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ARGENTINA PROJECT (S200000044)

U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/IPS

Margaret P. Grafeld, Director

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EMBASSY BUENOS AIRES 01 OF 02 180109Z

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USE EVERY OPPORTUNITY TO IMPRESS UPON COMMISSION CHAIRMAN AGUILAR THAT THE GOA'S BASIC ACCEPTANCE OF THE IAHRC TERMS WAS NOT REACHED WITHOUT A DEGREE OF DISCOMFORT AND RESISTANCE IN HARD LINE ARGENTINE MILITARY CIRCLES. THE PRESIDENTIAL OFFICE SOURCE EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT THE COMMISSION WILL CONDUCT ITSELF WITH UTMOST DISCRETION DURING ITS STAY IN ARGENTINA. THE AIDE ELABORATED THAT DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER ALLARA WAS FURIOUS ABOUT THE TERMS OF REFERENCE AGREED UPON BY THE CASA ROSADA, AND HE ALLEGED THAT FOREIGN MINISTRY HUMAN RIGHTS COORDINATOR ARLIA GOES ABOUT "ACCUSING THE PRESIDENTIAL PALACE OF TREASON".

5. THE AIDE INQUIRED WHAT WE PLAN TO DO NEXT, NOW THAT THE GOA COMMITMENT ON IAHRC INVITATION WAS FULFILLED. HE ASKED WHETHER WE WERE MOVING AHEAD ON PLANS TO HAVE ASSISTANT SECRETARY VANKY VISIT ARGENTINA. EMBOFF REMINDED THE AIDE THAT HE HIMSELF HAD EARLIER SUGGESTED (REFTEL A) THAT VANKY SHOULD NOT VISIT ARGENTINA UNTIL AFTER THE COMING CABINET CRISIS WAS RESOLVED. EMBOFF THEN INQUIRED ABOUT THE STATUS OF THE PROPOSED CHANGES. THE AIDE STATED THAT THE CHANGES IMPLY A REDISTRIBUTION OF FORCES IN THE CABINET ON THE PART OF THE ARMED FORCES AND THAT THE NAVY WAS RESISTING PRESIDENT VIDELA'S PLAN TO REMOVE THE FOREIGN MINISTRY, THE SOCIAL WELFARE MINISTRY AND THE INFORMATION SECRETARIAT OF THE PRESIDENCY FROM THE NAVY'S JURISDICTION.

6. ACCORDING TO THE AIDE, VIDELA'S PLANS CALL FOR CIVILIANS TO TAKE OVER THE ECONOMY--I.E., MARTINEZ DE HOS WOULD STAY-- SOCIAL WELFARE, JUSTICE AND EDUCATION MINISTRIES. THE ARMY WOULD RETAIN LABOR AND INTERIOR. THE NAVY WOULD GET DEFENSE AND PLANNING AND THE AIR FORCE THE FOREIGN MINISTRY. THE AIDE ALSO STATED THAT, WHILE CONSIDERABLE PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE IN "COMPATIBILIZING" THE SEPARATE POLITICAL PLANS OF THE THREE SERVICES, THE ARMY HAD AN UPHILL STRUGGLE AHEAD TO UNDO THE RATHER DETAILED POLITICAL PLAN AND TIMETABLE PROPOSED BY THE AIR FORCE WHICH IS LARGELY BASED ON THE BRAZILIAN MODEL AND WITH WHICH PRESIDENT VIDELA AND THE ARMY REPORTEDLY ARE IN DISAGREEMENT.)

7. THE AIDE ALSO SUGGESTED THAT IN ADDITION TO THE CABINET CHANGE FACTOR HE SUSPECTED THE TIMING OF MR. VANKY'S PROPOSED VISIT MIGHT BECOME COMPLICATED IF ARGENTINIAN AND CHILE HAVE NOT REACHED AN AGREEMENT ON THE BEAGLE CHANNEL PROBLEM BY NOVEMBER. (THE AIDE GAVE US TO BELIEVE THAT BOTH THE ARGENTINES AND CHILEANS ARE HANGING-TOUGH ON THEIR RESPECTIVE POSITIONS, THE ARGENTINES INSISTING ON FIXING THE BOUNDARY TO SOME SPECK OF LAND AND THE CHILEANS STICKING TO A MARITIME FRONTIER CONCEPT. THE AIDE ASSERTED THAT ARGENTINA'S INTERNATIONAL LAW EXPERTS MAINTAIN THAT A BOUNDARY BASED ON LAND IS LESS VULNERABLE TO THE EXPLOITATIVE ECONOMIC INCURSIONS OF THIRD COUNTRIES, ALTHOUGH HE ADMITTED THAT ARGENTINA'S ANTARCTIC CLAIMS MAY HAVE SOMETHING TO DO WITH ITS INSISTENCE ON LAND-BASED BOUNDARY LINE. WE TOOK HIS

CONTENTS AS MEANING NOT THAT A MILITARY CONFLICT MAY BE EXISTING IN THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE BUT RATHER THAT EXISTING TENSIONS MIGHT BE EXPECTED TO INCREASE AS THE STATUTORY DATE FOR THE END OF THE BILATERAL TALKS APPROACHED. WE WILL HEAR MORE ABOUT THE VANKY VISIT FROM OUR ARGENTINE COLLEAGUES, AND HAVE PROMISED TO STAY IN TOUCH ON THIS SUBJECT.

8. COMMENT: EMBASSY WILL GIVE FURTHER ANALYSIS TO NEWS STORIES AS THEY APPEAR REGARDING THE IAHRC VISIT. WHEN WE REFERRED TO CLARIN'S "CURIOUS" PRESENTATION IT WAS BECAUSE WE WERE STRUCK BY ITS AMBIGUITY AND MUDDLEMENT. THIS PROBABLY RESULTED FROM THE GOVERNMENT'S OWN CLEAVAGES THE INVESTIGATIVE LATITUDE THE COMMISSION'S CHARTER AFFORDS IT WAS DESCRIBED--WITHOUT PRECISELY STATING THAT THE ARGENTINE DOOR WOULD BE OPENED SO WIDE. WHAT MATTERS HOWEVER IS THAT THE SPLASH OF COLD WATER HAS BEEN ADMINISTERED, AND THE FACT OF THE COMMISSION'S VISIT IS BEFORE THE PUBLIC.
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